

In the Claims:

Claims 1 and 8 have been amended; claims 7 and 15 have been canceled. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

~~1. (Currently amended)~~ A tray for holding a plurality of ~~one or more~~ surgical fasteners, the tray comprising a base having a plurality of wells ~~have at least one well~~ therein, at least two ~~one~~ of the surgical fasteners being disposed within respective ones of the plurality of wells ~~the base~~ and a film over the base and the well;

wherein each of the wells and the surgical fasteners within each well are maintained in a sterile environment regardless if any of the other wells have been opened.

2. (Original) A tray according to claim 1 and further comprising a weakness in the film over the well whereby to more easily allow an instrument to penetrate the film and enter the well.

3. (Original) A tray according to claim 2 wherein the weakness comprises scoring of the film.

4. (Original) A tray according to claim 1 and further comprising an opening in the film over the well whereby to more easily allow an instrument to penetrate the film and enter the well.

5. (Original) A tray according to claim 4 wherein the opening comprises a slit.

6. (Original) A tray according to claim 1 and further comprising ingress means on the film over the well to allow an instrument to penetrate the film and enter the well.

7. (Canceled)

Serial No. 09/960,020

8.(Currently amended) A method of holding surgical fasteners comprising the steps of:

providing a tray having a base with a plurality of wells ~~at least one well~~ therein;
providing one of the surgical fasteners in the well; ~~and~~
covering the well with a film;
sterilizing the wells and surgical fasteners disposed therein; and
penetrating the film to access one of the surgical fasteners in one of the wells while
maintaining the sterile environment in the remaining wells.

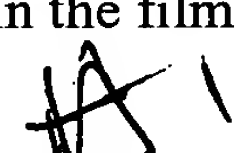
9.(Original) A method according to claim 8 and further comprising the steps of
penetrating the film with an instrument and removing the fastener from the well with the
instrument.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9 and further comprising the step of
modifying the film over the well to ease the ability of the instrument to penetrate the well.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of modifying the film
over the well to ease the ability of the instrument to penetrate the well comprises providing a
weakness in the film.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11 wherein the weakness comprises
scoring the film.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of modifying the film
over the well to ease the ability of the instrument to penetrate the well comprises providing an
opening in the film.


14. (Original) A method according to claim 13 wherein the opening comprises a slit.

15.(Canceled)

Serial No. 09/960,020

16. (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the instrument is an applier for applying the surgical fastener.

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concluded
